



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bob Fish, President
401-222-3636 x207
bob_fish@ripbs.org

Elliot Krieger, Communications
401-222-8471
elliot.krieger@ride.ri.gov

Rhode Island PBS and R.I. Department of Education Pilot Project Expands Access to GED Adult Education

GED Instructors Being Recruited for Video-On-Demand Technology Training

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND (April 24, 2007) – The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) and Rhode Island PBS Education Services have formed a partnership to launch a groundbreaking pilot project entitled, “Enhancing GED Instruction through the Use of Video-On-Demand.” Headed by RIDE Director of Adult Education Dr. Johan E. Uvin, and Rhode Island PBS Education Services Director Dr. María D. Velásquez, the project will train up to 42 GED instructors statewide to use video-on-demand (VOD) technology, and will make the digital content of the 39 episodes of the *GED Connection* series available to their adult education students.

The convenience and accessibility of VOD allows students to view their lessons and complete their assignments at any time and from any computer with Internet access. This flexibility is expected to appeal to members of the GED-eligible adult education population who might otherwise find it difficult to pursue a GED certificate through the more traditional method of classroom instruction.

“This partnership is another example of how the Education Department is working with various agencies to bring all students, including adult learners, to proficiency,” said Peter McWalters, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “Making available GED-preparation videos

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on demand is only the first initiative in a series of technology-based learning options we want to establish so that Rhode Island adults can build their skills anytime, anywhere. Efforts such as these will enable Rhode Islanders to increasingly meet the skill requirements of the new Rhode Island economy."

"This project offers a new learning experience for GED teachers and students alike," said Bob Fish, president of Rhode Island PBS. "Students will acquire valuable technology skills and build confidence as they learn marketable skills from the GED content. But the GED instructors will be learning as well, improving their own technology skills."

According to January 2007 statistics from the Office of Adult Education at RIDE, slightly more than 177,000 Rhode Islanders fall into the GED target population: They are 16 years of age or older, are not enrolled in school, have no high school diploma, and may have limited proficiency in English. Of those, nearly 142,000 do not have a high school diploma, and approximately 25,000 lack a high school credential and have limited English proficiency (i.e., report speaking no English at all or not speaking English well, according to U.S. Census 2000).

During a recent information session and preview of the pilot project at Rhode Island PBS, the directors and administrators of adult literacy agencies and organizations expressed their interest and enthusiasm for the project, seeing it as an innovative additional teaching and learning tool, and an important way to expand access to GED instruction.

VOD technology allows users to watch video over the Internet. Users select a video from a menu of files stored on a remote server and then watch the video in a media player. The media player's video buffer stores and presents the content, so the video file is never actually downloaded to the user's computer. This technology, also known as streaming video, allows large movie files to start faster and run smoother than if the file had to be downloaded to the user's computer.

Rhode Island PBS currently offers a video streaming curriculum program - with a library of 5,000 full-length and 50,000 clips of national and state education standards-based videos, complete with lesson plans, quizzes, and tests - to classrooms and libraries in K-12 schools throughout the state.

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The GED pilot project is a unique endeavor in Rhode Island's adult education system, with real-time development, usage, and testing of the *GED Connection* VOD content. During this pilot project, GED instructors will learn how to create user accounts for themselves and their students; design digital content for assignments, quizzes, and pre- and post-tests; implement student performance and program evaluations; and report utilization data.

Participating GED instructors will attend three training sessions of four hours each, for a total of 12 training hours. Training sessions are structured for beginner, intermediate, and advanced user levels, as determined by the teachers' self-evaluation of their technology skills. GED instructors who also hold an elementary or secondary education teaching certificate will be eligible to receive continuing education credits toward that certificate by participating in the pilot project.

To be eligible to participate, GED instructors must teach in the state of Rhode Island, have students currently enrolled in GED classes, and agree to attend the three training sessions and to submit two utilization reports. Recruitment for the pilot project is underway and will continue until May 10 or until the 42 training slots are filled, whichever comes first. Training sessions will be conducted from May 21 through June 4 at University Hall (Library Building) at Johnson & Wales University in Providence.

Training Sessions		Date	Time
Session I	Beginner	Monday, May 21, 2007	1pm-5pm
Session II	Beginner	Thursday, May 24, 2007	1pm-5pm
Session III	Beginner	Wednesday, May 30, 2007	1pm-5pm
Session I	Intermediate	Tuesday, May 22, 2007	1pm-5pm
Session II	Intermediate	Friday, May 25, 2007	1pm-5pm
Session III	Intermediate	Thursday, May 31, 2007	1pm-5pm
Session I	Advanced	Wednesday, May 23, 2007	1pm-5pm
Session II	Advanced	Tuesday, May 29, 2007	1pm-5pm
Session III	Advanced	Friday, June 1, 2007	1pm-5pm
Make-up Session		Monday, June 4, 2007	1pm-5pm

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GED instructors seeking additional information or who want to register for the pilot project should contact Rhode Island PBS Education Services by e-mail at education@ripbs.org, or by phone at 401-222-3636 x382.

The mission of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education is "to lead and support schools and communities in ensuring that all students achieve at the high levels needed to lead fulfilling and productive lives, to compete in academic and employment settings, and to contribute to society." For more information about the R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, visit www.ride.ri.gov

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